To Bihar

Reg. No. B 3092

HARIJAN

12 Pages

Editor: PYARELAL

VOL. X, No. 40 AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1946 TWO ANNAS

A FRIENDLY OVERTURE

"We are today suffering from a double evil — suppression of facts and concoction," remarked Gandhiji to a Director of an influential British daily paper who had come to see Gandhiji at New Delhi and told him that his paper was anxious to do a friendly turn to India. "It does not pay to emphasize news about riots. My paper does not," he had remarked. But Gandhiji told him that he and his paper would be doing a real service to India not by suppressing relevant facts but by presenting them truthfully, without bias or prejudice. "Truth never damages a cause that is just," he said.

Replying to another question as to when the present trouble would end, Gandhiji remarked that it was bound to go, though he did not see any signs of abatement just yet. "There are interested parties fomenting it."

"Mine may be a voice in the wilderness today," he added, "but I maintain that so long as British troops are here, both Hindus and Mussalmans will continue to look up to them for help and the trouble will continue. Nothing worse could happen to a people struggling to be free."

BRITISH TROOPS AN OBSTACLE

This shocked the British conscience of the friend. "The Britisher would like his troops to go out quicker. Who obstructs?" he asked.

"Who else but the British themselves, unless you can show that it is physically impossible to effect immediate withdrawal," replied Gandhiji.

After some parrying the friend admitted that the British commercial and other vested interests in India and their henchmen stood in the way of their withdrawal. He was, however, still doubtful as to the function of British troops in the maintenance of law and order. "You say, there can be no peace while they are here. Yet everyday there is an increasing demand for them for the maintenance of peace. The complaint is that they are not sufficiently used."

"That is the very reason," replied Gandhiji, "why they should be withdrawn. Their presence, in my opinion, does not act as a preventive measure but becomes punitive. Where they are used to maintain law and order, it is after the trouble. Future historians will bear this out. Order will be restored in East Bengal too. But after what slaughter, what suffering?"

"No," he continued. "The British troops are in India not to protect India but to protect British interests which were imposed on India and which are now so well entrenched that even the British Government cannot dislodge them. The British did not come here as philanthropists, nor is there any altruism in their continued stay here or the continuation of their troops, all that might be claimed to the contrary notwithstanding."

TO END WAR

The conversation then turned on the question of war. "How do you think the succession of wars such as we have witnessed of late can be stopped?" he asked.

"I have no doubt," replied Gandhiji, "that unless big nations shed their desire of exploitation and the spirit of violence of which war is the natural expression and atom bomb the inevitable consequence, there is no hope for peace in the world. I tried to speak out during the war and wrote open letters to the British people, to Hitler and to the Japanese and was dubbed a fifth columnist for my pains."

"But non-violence might take a long time to act. But for the second front there probably would have been no Russia," argued the friend.

"All these are arguments dictated by reason," replied Gandhiji. "It is not permitted me to think in these terms or else I would be denying my faith which today burns brighter than ever in spite of all the bitter experiences that I have had. History provides us with a whole series of miracles of masses of people being converted to a particular viewpoint in the twinkling of an eye. Take the Boer War. It has given to the English language the word 'Maffeking'. People went mad on the Maffeking Day. Yet inside of two years the whole British nation underwent a transformation. Henry Campbell Bannerman became the Premier and practically all the gains of war were given up." The recent Labour victory at the polls was another instance in point. "To me it is a sufficient miracle that in spite of his oratory and brilliance, Churchill should cease to be the idol of the British people who till yesterday hung on his lips and listened to him in awe. All these instances are enough to sustain the faith of a believer like me that when all other powers are gone one will remain, call it God, Nature or whatever you like." His own faith in the triumph of non-violence he likened to that of the witnesses in the Second Coming of Christ. It was to take place within the lifetime of the witnesses though it has taken two thousand years and yet remains a distant dream. Faith could think in no other terms.

Sodepur, 30-10-'46 PYARELAL

HARIJAN SERVICE IN CENTRAL INDIA, 1944-45

So far as Harijan service is concerned, Central India is exceptionally fortunate in its ruling princes, at least three of whom, Maharaja Yeshwantrao Holkar of Indore, Maharaja Jivajirao Shinde of Gwalior and Maharaja Gulabsingh of Rewa, have issued proclamations making a declaration of Harijan rights. The Gwalior proclamation was made on 4th May last year. These three States alone have a population of about 70 lakhs and cover an area of over 50,000 square miles. Thus Central India is more progressive than Kathiawad where in Lathi alone the State has made such an announcement. Is it too much to expect in 1946 that other States will not think it below their dignity but will deem it a privilege to follow the example set by tiny Lathi?

The Indore Branch of the Sangh observed Harijan Day on 1st March 1945, when Harijans were admitted to temples and to two Hindu restaurants. Rai Bahadur Sheth Hiralalji has on behalf of the mill-owners announced that they would spend five per cent of their profits in building houses for the workers including Harijans. Let us hope that this sum which now amounts to about 75,000 rupees will be spent before the next report is out. Land to the extent of 250 *bighas* was obtained for Harijan settlers. The Branch has established a hand-made paper factory employing several Harijan families and the report under review is appropriately printed on Indore-made paper. It has also installed two new-model oil *ghanis* worked by Harijans. Every place where waste paper is readily available should have a hand-made paper industry and pure oil *ghanis* of course must be there in every place, large or small, without exception.

The Gwalior Branch conducted well-directed propaganda at the *Sinhastha* Fair in Ujjain and received the very welcome support of Acharya Janakidasji of Hanuman-gadhi, Ayodhya, among other Sadhus. Shri Krishnadas Date who had taken to politics last year has returned to his old love, Harijan service, to which he devoted the purse presented to him.

The Bhopal branch under Lala Mulkrajaji and Shri Mehnot financed itself independently of the Central India organization.

Badwani State has declared the public schools and wells open to Harijans and will now, it is hoped, take active steps to implement its declaration. Panna and Ajaygadh authorities must see to it that Mehtars and Basors are permitted to exercise their right of travelling by public buses. Ajaygadh, Bijawar and Charkhari have still to arrange to give maternity leave to Harijan women workers.

In Tikamgadh there was an inter-dinner attended by *Savarna* Hindus and Harijans.

We shall close this review with a final comment. The statement of accounts shows that while about 11,000 Rs. was spent on schools, hostels, scholarships and medical aid to Harijans, as much as 6,000 Rs. was spent on administration and propaganda. It should be our aim to increase the former figure and reduce the latter from year to year.

V. G. D

PROHIBITION IN C. P.

According to the report of the Excise Commissioner for C. P., in the latter half of 1937, the Congress Government in C. P. decided to adopt the policy of total prohibition of liquor including *toddy*. To implement this policy the Central Provinces and Berar Prohibition Act was passed and brought into force from April 1938. In the year 1940, the area under Prohibition totalled 22,285 sq. miles representing approximately one-fourth area of the whole province. Prohibition was withdrawn from Katni-Murwara town from 1st January, 1945, but it has been decided by the present Government to reintroduce it with effect from 1st October, 1946 and to extend it, so as to cover an additional total area of 17,360 sq. miles.

The total area under prohibition thus is 39,645 sq. miles and covers a little less than half the province, the total provincial area being 98,369 sq. miles.

During the current financial year Government will lose about 45·5 lakhs on account of extension of prohibition. Government further proposes to make the whole province dry within a very short period, thus sacrificing a revenue amounting to about Rs. 1½ crores from liquor and *toddy*.

The Excise staff have been instructed to take help, if necessary, from local M.L.As. and Congress Committees in the prevention and detection of offences under the Prohibition Act. To prevent illicit distillation, rules have been framed restricting the possession of *mahura*, the most important base for the distillation of liquor, to not more than 5 seers and requiring permits and licenses for its possession and sale in larger quantities. These rules have already been enforced in the Wardha and Akola districts from 15-8-'46 and will be extended to other Prohibition areas after experience has been gained of their working in these districts.

Other proposed measures to make Prohibition effective are:

1. To set up new Anti-Drink Committees in dry areas and revitalize old ones and establish temperance committees in the wet areas to prepare the ground for prohibition. It is further proposed to organize caste *panchayats* and recreation centres to further temperance work.

2. To carry on anti-drink propaganda by magic lantern slides, anti-drink posters and by issuing prohibition literature. A sum of Rs. 50,000 has been sanctioned for this purpose.

3. 75,000 leaflets explaining the provisions of the prohibition Act of 1938 and 15,000 large size notices, specifying the areas in which prohibition has been introduced, have been printed in various langu-

ages and supplied to Deputy Commissioners and Railway authorities for exhibition.

4. Government servants addicted to drink have been transferred from 'dry' to 'wet' areas in the interests of effective enforcement of prohibition.

The latest report on the effects of pre-war prohibition says:

"General reports indicate that prohibition has undoubtedly improved the moral, physical, social and economic condition of the ex-addicts, although the increased cost of living has counter-balanced the savings from prohibition. They now look healthier and happier and their children are well clad and better fed. The women folk particularly appreciate the benefits of prohibition since it has brought peace and happiness to their homes. They now find their husbands more trustworthy and steadier in their work and they can exert healthier influence on their unintoxicated husbands in dissuading them from becoming victims of other vices."

Let us hope that the rosy picture will now prove rosier because of the advances suggested by the past.

New Delhi, 14-10-'46 PYARELAL

ARTIFICIAL PRACTICES IN AGRICULTURE

It has now become an accepted maxim that for the maintenance of health what is needed is not merely good looking food but healthily grown food. The latter depends on soil health. Just as the quantity of flesh on a person's body is no indication of his health, the size and yield of the crop is no guarantee of its health-giving quality. Artificial manures might produce prize crops in respect of yield and the size of the grain, but the food thus raised is found to be lacking in certain vital principles and animals fed on it show signs of ill health and malnutrition. To the controversy of artificial versus natural manure a valuable contribution has now been made by Friend Sykes, a highly successful Wiltshire farmer in *Humus and Farmer* (Faber).

Two years ago Farmer Sykes began rearing cows, pigs and race horses that won national fame. A long run of achievement, however ended with disaster.

"To show the way to other breeders," says the *News Review* "his champion herd of black and white Freisian cattle was submitted to the then new tuberculin test. Two-thirds proved to be diseased, although their milk yields had been phenomenal. Convinced that the trouble was due to crops grown with artificial manures and to the feeding of 'concentrates' instead of natural foods, he sold out.

"Buying Chantry, highest farm on Salisbury Plain's eastern end, Sykes started again in 1936 with a new 'natural' system. Of his thin, poor and rabbit-infested acres a friend said: 'This is not farmland—it is just space-out-of-doors.' But in fewer than ten years the black down land yielded mammoth crops, champion beasts.

"No factory cattle foods, no artificial manure, was Sykes' rule. Early disease on the farm was defeated by ploughing, which brought about health-giving fertility. Subsoiling 2 ft. down released valuable minerals which deep-rooting plants brought to the surface. New methods of haymaking and harvest improved fodder with startling effects on the large livestock population.

"Most important of all, Friend Sykes used humus (scientifically rotted animal and vegetable refuse) to manure his land. The highly complex bacterial life of the soil was enriched, instead of poisoned by chemicals.

"The fashionable approach to soil is not biological but chemical," objects Sykes. "One hundred years of interested propaganda by vested industrial interests has pushed to the fore this 'artificial' view." He contends that artificial manure produces food "which reduces vitality so low that resistance to disease is becoming less and less."

According to him, "we are approaching the greatest of all menaces that have ever faced civilization — the day when soil fertility in almost every country will be a thing of the past."

Here are Sykes' views on other artificial practices which threaten to contribute to this impending doom:

"Artificial insemination may prove to be one of the most mischievous practices that so-called scientific agriculture has ever dared to play with.

"Sewage emptying into the sea is scandalous and abominable wastefulness. It should return to the land.

"Artificially dried grain often will not make bread. Sterility in women coincides with the introduction of the white loaf. Nothing is so important to man than that he should speedily return to the consumption of the whole wheat bread.

"Burning straw instead of ploughing it back into the soil is one of the most heinous crimes any farmer can commit.

"Many farmers keep cows indoors closely tied by the neck for five months in the year, feed them with concentrated foods the cow's digestion was never intended to cope with, and then expect the beasts to keep healthy."

New Delhi, 14-10-'46 PYARELAL

THE GOSPEL OF SELFLESS ACTION
OR
THE GITA ACCORDING TO GANDHI
By *Mahadev Desai*
With Gandhiji's Foreword
Price Rs. Four, Postage Nine Annas
Available at:
Navajivan Karyalaya, — P. B. 105, Kalupur, Ahmedabad; — 130, Princess Street, Bombay, 2; — 299 Sadashiv Peth, Poona 2; — Kanpith Bazar, Surat; — Lakhajiraj Road, Rajkot; — 641/11 Kucha Mahajani, Chandni Chowk, Delhi

HARIJAN

November 10 1946

TO BIHAR

To Bihar,

Bihar of my dreams seems to have falsified them. I am not relying upon reports that might be prejudiced or exaggerated. The continued presence of the Central Chief Minister and his colleague furnishes an eloquent tale of the tragedy of Bihar. It is easy enough to retort that things under the Muslim League Government in Bengal were no better, if not worse and that Bihar is merely a result of the latter. A bad act of one party is no justification for a similar act by the opposing party, more especially when it is rightly proud of its longest and largest political record. I must confess, too, that although I have been in Calcutta for over a week, I do not yet know the magnitude of the Bengal tragedy. Though Bihar calls me, I must not interrupt my programme for Noakhali. And is counter-communalism any answer to the communalism of which Congressmen have accused the Muslim League? Is it Nationalism to seek barbarously to crush the fourteen percent of the Muslims in Bihar?

I do not need to be told that I must not condemn the whole of Bihar for the sake of the sins of a few thousand Biharis. Does not Bihar take credit for one Brajkishore Prasad or one Rajendra Prasad? I am afraid, if the misconduct in Bihar continues, all the Hindus of India will be condemned by the world. That is its way, and it is not a bad way either. The misdeeds of Bihari Hindus may justify Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's taunt that the Congress is a Hindu organization in spite of its boast that it has in its ranks a few Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and others. Bihari Hindus are in honour bound to regard the minority Muslims as their brethren requiring protection, equal with the vast majority of Hindus. Let not Bihar, which has done so much to raise the prestige of the Congress, be the first to dig its grave

I am in no way ashamed of my *ahimsa*. I have come to Bengal to see how far in the nick of time my *ahimsa* is able to express itself in me. But I do not want in this letter to talk of *ahimsa* to you. I do want, however, to tell you that what you are reported to have done will never count as an act of bravery. For thousands to do to death a few hundreds is no bravery. It is worse than cowardice. It is unworthy of nationalism, of any religion. If you had given a blow against a blow, no one would have dared to point a finger against you. What you have done is to degrade yourselves and drag down India.

You should say to Pandit Jawaharlalji, Nishtar Saheb and Dr. Rajendra Prasad to take away their military and themselves and attend to the affairs of India. This they can only do, if you repent of your inhumanity and assure them that Muslims are as much your care as your own brothers and sisters.

You should not rest till every Muslim refugee has come back to his home which you should undertake to rebuild and ask your Ministers to help you to do so. You do not know what critics have said to me about your Ministers.

I regard myself as a part of you. Your affection has compelled that loyalty in me. And since I claim to have better appreciation than you seem to have shown of what Bihari Hindus should do, I cannot rest till I have done some measure of penance. Predominantly for reasons of health, I had put myself on the lowest diet possible soon after my reaching Calcutta. That diet now continues as a penance after the knowledge of the Bihar tragedy. The low diet will become a fast unto death, if the erring Biharis have not turned over a new leaf.

There is no danger of Bihar mistaking my act for anything other than pure penance as a matter of sacred duty.

No friend should run to me for assistance or to show sympathy. I am surrounded by loving friends. It would be wholly wrong and irrelevant for any other person to copy me. No sympathetic fast or semi-fast is called for. Such action can only do harm. What my penance should do is to quicken the conscience of those who know me and believe in my *bona fides*. Let no one be anxious for me. I am like all of us in God's keeping.

Nothing will happen to me so long as He wants service through the present tabernacle.

Sodepur, 6-11-'46

Your Servant
M. K. GANDHI

CRUELTY TO THE DUMB CREATION

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A Mysorean draws my attention to

"a small matter which however literally means life and death to the unfortunate dogs and cattle impounded in the Bangalore City pounds. The conditions there are very bad and the poor animals imprisoned for no fault of theirs are not properly fed nor given water. The lethal apparatus for the killing of dogs is out of order since some time and no attempts seem to have been made to repair it. The crude and cruel method of poisoning the animal is resorted to."

I have had the misfortune to advise the destruction of stray dogs. But that had to be, if men would be so cruel as, out of a false sense of pity, to feed *pariah* dogs and permit them to become a menace to the neighbouring population. But my advice can never include impounding such dogs and torturing them as those mentioned by my correspondent seem to have been. Humanitarian instinct demands destruction of such animals in an instantaneous and painless manner. I would love to hope that there is exaggeration in what the correspondent has stated. Anyway, the Municipality in question and all such other institutions should mend their manner if they do not satisfy the test demanded by humanity.

On the train to Calcutta, 29-10-'46

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A friend, who is a thinker, writes in connection with village industries:

"Several of your ideas, good in themselves, are presented to the public in such a form as to call for a high standard of ethical sense in the people to whom they are addressed. The fact, however, is that the common man is actuated in his conduct only by necessity or self-interest. An economic order based on an appeal to sentiment or man's "higher nature" alone cannot last. The reason, why after all these years of effort the Khadi programme has failed to show a more substantial result, lies in the fact that your followers, the British vested interests, the mill-owners and cloth dealers were all ruled by their essentially selfish human nature.

"I too want society to be based on high moral principles of honesty and straight dealing between man and man. But I feel that it is not possible till we can eliminate altogether the spirit of commercialism or the profit motive. Just now there are so many control, — control over food, over transport and so on. The time is opportune for a big step forward.

"The Bombay Government has set up a committee for village industries. It includes Shri Manu Subedar, Shri Lakshmidas Asar and Shri Dhotre. My scheme is as follows :

"Taking each village or a group of two or three villages as a unit, the population can be divided into children, women, old people and able-bodied and healthy young folk. Then, there are those who are unfit to put in regular hours of work or work all the year round and lastly the unskilled lot, lacking means or skill or both for the pursuit of any particular vocation.

"Of these the children could easily be made to work for 3 to 4 hours a day, provided the work is not of a fatiguing nature. The remaining half of the day they could have to themselves for attending school.

"The children should be paid at the rate of one anna and the adults four annas per day from the day they begin to work. As they acquire more skill the wages of the children should be increased up to 5 annas and those of the adults up to 8 annas per day.

"The manufacture in one village should be confined to one kind of goods only, so that in about two months' time the workers will acquire skill and avoid making mistakes. The manufactured article should be such as can be utilized locally. The State should arrange to supply raw materials and appoint two or three experts to train the workers. The State should also undertake to popularize the manufactured goods and arrange for their transport and cheap distribution to the poor consumer.

"In the case of many articles thus manufactured the cost will be less than if they were manufactured in big factories. One reason for their cheapness would be the economy in wages. The savings should, therefore, be utilized for the benefit of the workers. If, as a result of the able-bodied people being more and more absorbed in agriculture, railways and other such occupations, fewer hands are left for cottage crafts and production falls it would not matter.

"This scheme will enable millions to add to their income and make the two ends meet without throwing them on the unemployment dole or loss of self-respect. This social insurance scheme is in accordance with our Indian culture and is based on my personal experience of 35 years. It enables even men and women without any kind of special skill or previous training to eke out a living. Those who wish to earn more can take to more lucrative occupations, if they can find any. But none need feel stranded.

"The children can in this way not only be taught a craft but also get their education in addition. The expense should be charged to the scheme.

"Some features of the scheme are :

"It converts a large proportion of unskilled labour in the country into skilled labour.

"By bringing transport, stores, accounts etc. under State control, we eliminate completely the commercial motive from a vast field of the average man's life.

"One or two crores of men, women and children engaged under this scheme would put 25 to 50 lakhs of rupees into their pockets every day and thus millions will feel the glow of new life.

"The labour that is at present going to waste will be utilized for producing goods worth one to two crores per year.

"The State will obtain raw materials at the cheapest rates by buying straight from the producers. Whatever the State buys would be bought at cost price.

"Should a problem arise calling for consultation with a specialist or a technical expert, his services should be requisitioned for a specified period and he should be paid remuneration for that period.

"The man who is engaged to keep stores, accounts etc. should be made responsible for the education of the children as well. After two or three years, the education should be carried on by the monitor system, that is to say, the senior boys should teach the junior ones and the teacher should teach the senior boys only.

"This teacher should also keep about 50 commonly used drugs. For instance, allopathic drugs like Tr. iodine and *ayurvedic* drugs like myrobalan supplied by the State to each village, along with the relevant literature. These drugs should be sold to the villagers at the cheapest rates.

"The following is a list of some of the household articles that can be manufactured in this way :

"Cloth	Match stricks
Paper	Empty tins made of cardboard and tin
Pencils, pen holders, etc.	Litho-label printing
Wire articles made out of pins etc.	Masala
Soap	Papad, wadi, etc.

Earthenware	Cots
Pottery	Combs
Buttons	Brushes, broom-sticks etc.
Glassware — bangles	Pen-knives, table-knives scissors, etc.
Registers, book-binding	Leather goods
Agricultural Implements	Ink
Gur	Glue
Nails	Lac
Hair Oil	Musical instruments
Boot Polish	Fountain pens
Metal Polish	Bicycles, parts of watches
Phenyle	Stockings, banyan, etc.
Caps	Candles
Chappals	Mirrors
Utensils of daily use	Play things."
String, cord, straps	
Toys	
Small wooden articles	

The above letter presents a fascinating picture and deserves careful consideration. One thing is obvious. The writer has given the first place to cloth. It is the only article, in the list, of universal use. The various processes involved in Khadi production can engage millions of adults and children and enable them to earn a fair amount. This includes the weavers. The weavers live in the cities today. The middleman exploits them. If the people's Government could supply them with all the yarn they require it would simplify things for them and put their vocation on a stable basis. They would not then need to live in the cities. But this is beside the point.

My difficulties are two. One is whether it is possible to sell hand-made articles as cheaply as machine-made ones. The second is that out of the articles that have been enumerated in the scheme there is hardly any except Khadi which can become universal. They will not, in a large measure, be consumed locally and so will have to be sold in the cities. This is as it should be. The villagers should develop such a high degree of skill that articles prepared by them should command a ready market outside. When our villages are fully developed there will be no dearth in them of men with a high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village poets, village artists, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short there will be nothing in life worth having which will not be had in the villages. Today the villages are dung heaps. Tomorrow they will be like tiny gardens of Eden where dwell highly intelligent folk whom no one can deceive or exploit.

The reconstruction of the villages along these lines should begin right now. That might necessitate some modification of the scheme. The reconstruction of the villages should not be organized on a temporary but permanent basis.

My second difficulty is that in the scheme under question craft and education have been divorced from each other. Craft, art, health and education should all be integrated into one scheme. *Nayi Talim* is a beautiful blend of all the four and covers the whole education of the individual from the time of conception to the moment of death. Therefore, I would not divide village uplift work into water-tight compartments from the very beginning but undertake an activity which will combine all four. Instead of regarding craft and industry as different from education I will regard the former as the medium for the latter. *Nayi Talim* therefore ought to be integrated into the scheme.

On the train to Calcutta, 29-10-'46

(From the original in Gujarati)

WEEKLY LETTER

THE CALL

After much travail, deep thought and considerable argument, Gandhiji fixed the date of his departure for Bengal for the 28th of October. "I do not know what I shall be able to do there," he remarked in the course of an argument with a very esteemed friend, who made an eleventh hour effort to dissuade him from setting on such a long journey just then. "All I know is that I won't be at peace with myself unless I go there." He then went on to describe the "power of thought". "There are two kinds of thoughts — idle and active. There may be myriads of the former swarming in one's brain. They do not count." He likened them to unfertilized ova in a spawn. "But one pure, active thought, proceeding from the depth and endowed with all the undivided intensity of one's being, becomes dynamic and works like a fertilized ovum." He was averse to put a curb on the spontaneous urge which he felt within him to go to the people of Noakhali. Speaking before the evening prayer gathering on Sunday last at New Delhi, Gandhiji said that he was leaving for Calcutta the next morning. He did not know when God would bring him again to Delhi. He wanted to go to Noakhali from Calcutta. It was a difficult journey and he was in poor health. But one had to do one's duty and trust in God to make the way smooth. It was not that God necessarily and always removed hardships from one's path, but He did always enable one to bear them.

He did not want anyone to come to the station, he continued. India had given him enough affection. It needed no further demonstration.

He was not going to Bengal to pass judgment on anybody. He was going there as a servant of the people and he would meet Hindus and Muslims alike. Some Muslims looked upon him as an enemy today. They had not done so always. But he did not mind their anger. Were not his own religionists angry with him at times? From the age of seventeen he had learnt the lesson that all mankind, be they of any nationality, colour or country were his own kith and kin. If they were God's servants, they had to become servants of all His creation.

It was in that capacity that he was going to Bengal. He would tell them that Hindus and Muslims could never be enemies, one of the other. They were born and brought up in India and they had to live and die in India. Change of religion could not alter that fundamental fact. If some people liked to believe that change of religion

changed one's nationality also, even they need not become enemies.

Sufferings of women had always melted his heart. He wanted to go to Bengal and wipe their tears and put heart into them, if he could. In Calcutta he would try to see the Governor and the Prime Minister Mr. Suhrawardy and then proceed to Noakhali.

He was proceeding under auspices none too happy. He referred to the ugly demonstrations before the Viceroy's House on the day before when Jawaharlalji and some of his colleagues in the Interim Government were abused and insulted. It was bad. Why should such things happen when the two parties, the Muslim League and the Congress, had formed a coalition at the Centre? Praise or abuse made no difference to the leaders who wanted to serve them to the best of their ability. But the people had to behave.

"Let us all still pray and hope that all the Ministers will be able to work as a team. If India can speak with one voice, she will be the greatest country in the world and every true Indian must wish her to attain that status."

THE JOURNEY

The journey proved to be as strenuous as some of us had feared. It was after 12 years that he was travelling on this line. Naturally there were mammoth crowds at all big stations on the way — at Aligarh, Tundla, Cawnpore and Asansol, the whole platform was like a swarming ant-heap of humanity. They clambered on the roof, choked the windows, broke glass, smashed in the wooden shutters and yelled and shouted till one's ears split. They pulled the alarm chain again and again to obtain *darshan*, making it necessary to disconnect the vacuum brakes. The station authorities tried to drive them away by directing against them the water hose from the hydrant overhead. It made no difference to them; only it flooded the compartment! At Aligarh the rags in the grease box of the brake began to smoulder and emit volumes of thick, acrid smoke which filled the compartment. It was with the utmost difficulty that one could manage to get through the crush and report to the railway authorities. If fire had broken out one wonders how the party could have got out of the compartment at all with all the luggage.

Later in the evening Gandhiji sat with his fingers thrust into his ears to keep out the shouting and the din when they became unbearable. And yet when it was suggested to him that he might allow the lights in the compartment to be switched off to discourage *darshan*-seekers he turned down the suggestion. The only way he could requite the simple faith of the masses was, he said, by serving them with his last drop of energy and never to put his personal comfort before what he considered to be his duty towards them.

AT SODEPUR

Gandhiji's train arrived at Lilooah five hours behind time. From the station he was driven straight to Shri Satish Das Gupta's Khadi Pratisthan Ashram at Sodepur which he reached at 5-30 in the evening. A crowd of several hundred had gathered there from round about Sodepur for the evening prayer. The advertised time for prayer was 5-30 p. m. But Gandhiji was able to attend prayer only after 7 p. m. In his prayer discourse he told them how he had never dreamt that he would be coming back to Sodepur so soon. But God had sent him in their midst again. The train had arrived five hours late. He called that also the will of God. No doubt there were big crowds at Aligarh, Khurja Road, Cawnpore and other big stations and the train was detained as a result. But he literally believed in the old maxim that not a blade of grass moves but by His will. Some might say that all his talk about God was a make-believe which he used as a blind to cover his hypocrisy. All he could say was that he was not aware of any hypocrisy in himself. He spoke what he believed to be God's truth. As regards his future plan Gandhiji said that he had come to Calcutta with a blank mind to do His will. What he would do here and how long he would stay in Bengal he did not know. God would indicate to him the next step on reaching Noakhali.

The next day, owing to his engagements in Calcutta with H. E. the Governor and the Prime Minister, he had again to apologize to his audience for coming late to the prayer meeting. "He who gives all his time to the service of the people, his whole life is an unbroken round of prayer," he remarked. He did not however, wish thereby to diminish the importance of fixed time for prayer. There was a difference between community prayer and individual prayer. He was sorry, he had not been able to do justice to the former. It was generous of them to have waited for him with such exemplary patience and it filled him with joy and faith and confidence in regard to the task before him. But he could not forgive himself so easily for his failure to keep punctually the prayer appointment with them.

He drew their attention to the Viceroy's appeal, issued in the name of the whole Cabinet of which the Viceroy was the President and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru the Vice-President and which consisted of both Congress and Muslim League representatives. In that appeal the Viceroy, on behalf of himself and his colleagues, had appealed that the two major communities of India should bury the hatchet and become one at heart. The unity should be genuine, not imposed by the military or the police. The speaker had come to Bengal for that purpose. He took no side. He could only side with truth and justice. He wanted them all to pray with him for the establishment of heart unity between the Muslims and the Hindus. Their name would be mud in the world, if they degraded themselves by fighting among themselves like wild beasts.

A FAINT RAY OF HOPE

Speaking on the third day of his arrival here, Gandhiji was able to tell his audience at the evening prayer meeting that he saw a faint ray of hope that

peace might be established between the communities. He had met H. E. the Governor, and his Chief Minister twice. The visit to the former was more or less in the nature of a courtesy call. His main business was with the Chief Minister. As one drove through the deserted streets with garbage heaps, at places banked up nearly two feet high against the pavements, and entire rows of gutted shops and burnt-out houses in the side-streets and by-lanes as far as the eye could reach, one felt overcome with a sinking feeling at the mass madness that can turn man into less than the brute. By its very nature this state of things cannot last. Human nature won't stand it. As Abraham Lincoln said, "You cannot fool all the people for all time." There seem to be indications that the people are already beginning to sicken of the carnival of blood and bestiality. They had been fighting amongst themselves like wild beasts. The fighting could do no good to Calcutta, Bengal, India or the world.

To make peace between quarrelling parties, the speaker said, had been his vocation from his early youth. Even while he practised as a lawyer, he tried to bring the contending parties together. Why could not the two communities be brought together? He was an optimist, he said.

From them he wanted only this help: that they should pray with him that this mutual slaughter might stop and the two communities might really become one at heart. Whether India was to become divided or remain one whole could not be decided by force. It had to be done through mutual understanding. Whether they decided to part or stay together, they must do so with goodwill and understanding.

He could never be party to anything which might mean humiliation or loss of self-respect for anyone. Therefore any peace to be substantial must be honourable, never at the cost of honour.

In this he was only echoing the sentiment expressed to him by a prominent Muslim who had seen him. This friend had said: "We must reach our goal, whatever it might be — Pakistan or undivided India — without bloodshed or fighting. I go so far as to say that if it cannot be reached except through bloodshed and fighting amongst ourselves, it is not worth reaching."

THE GRIM RESOLVE

"Why do you want to go to Noakhali? You did not go to Bombay, Ahmedabad or Chhapra, where things have happened that are infinitely worse than Noakhali. Would not your going there only add to the existing tension?" Was it because in these places it was the Muslims who had been the sufferers that he did not go there and would go to Noakhali because the sufferers there were Hindus? — he was asked by a Muslim friend the other day. Gandhiji's reply was that he made no distinction between Hindu and Muslim. He would certainly have gone straight to any of the places mentioned by the friend, if anything approaching what had happened at Noakhali had happened there and if he felt that he could do nothing without being on the spot. It was the cry of outraged womanhood that had peremptorily called him to Noakhali. He felt he would find his bearings only on seeing things for himself at Noakhali. His technique of non-violence was on trial. It remained to be seen how it would answer in the face of the present crisis. If it had no validity it were better that he himself should declare his insolvency. He was not going to leave Bengal until the last embers of the trouble were stamped out. "I may stay on here for a whole year or more. If necessary, I will die here. But I will not acquiesce in failure. If the only effect of my presence in the flesh is to make people look up to me in hope and expectation which I can do nothing to vindicate, it would be far better that my eyes were closed in death." He had mentally prepared himself, he added, for abstention from the Congress session, if necessary. He had similarly disengaged himself mentally from all his responsibilities in respect of Sevagram and Uruli — his latest love.

But with all his impatience to get to Noakhali he had to announce on the fourth day at the prayer gathering that he would not be able to leave for Noakhali on the next day as he had intended to. The Prime Minister had sent him word that the train for him could not be arranged so soon. He hoped to leave on Saturday or Sunday. In the meantime he would try to render whatever service he could to the metropolis.

Sodepur, 1-11-'46 PYARELAL

Dola Palki

The Dola Palki dispute in Garhwal should be set at rest seeing that the U. P. Government are said to have passed orders for prompt measures to be taken against those who would interfere with Harijan bridegrooms riding on ponies or using any other form of conveyance in spite of custom to the contrary trotted out by objectors.

On the train to Calcutta, M. K. G.
29-10-'46

CONTENTS

			PAGE
A FRIENDLY OVERTURE	...	PYARELAL	389
HARIJAN SERVICE IN CENTRAL INDIA, 1944-45	...	V. G. D.	390
PROHIBITION IN C. P.	...	PYARELAL	390
ARTIFICIAL PRACTICES IN AGRICULTURE	...	PYARELAL	391
TO BIHAR	...	M. K. GANDHI	392
CRUELTY TO THE DUMB CREATION	...	M. K. GANDHI	392
VILLAGE INDUSTRIES	...	M. K. GANDHI	393
WEEKLY LETTER	...	PYARELAL	394
ENGLISH INTO HINDUSTANI — INSTALMENT VI	...		397
NOTE :			
DOLA PALKI	...	M. K. G.	396

Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Kalupur, Ahmedabad
Subscription Rates — INLAND : One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; FOREIGN : One year Rs. 8 or 14. sh. or $. 3.